

## IMLS Blog Guidelines

We are delighted that you will be a contributor to the IMLS UpNext blog. To ensure the highest possible editorial quality, blog post submissions must adhere to these guidelines and to the [IMLS Commenting and Posting Policy](#) to be considered for posting. Please maintain a conversational editorial tone and write all posts in your voice. Thank you for your time and support.

### **What is the purpose of the UpNext blog?**

The IMLS UpNext blog supports conversation about lessons learned and what works in library and museum service including knowledge sharing, best practices, and thought leadership.

### **How do I submit a blog post?**

Please submit your final draft with a signed [IMLS Blog Contributor Authorization and Release](#) to Melissa Heintz, IMLS Public Affairs Specialist at [mheintz@imls.gov](mailto:mheintz@imls.gov)

### **What makes a successful post?**

#### **The tone of your blog post should be friendly and informal.**

- 1) Write in the first person.  
Keep the reader in mind. Use a conversational tone and write like you would speak to a friend who is interested in your work.
- 2) Keep content as concise as possible (blog posts should be between 300 and 500 words)  
Get to the point as quickly as possible  
Use easy-to-understand, shorter, common words and phrases  
Avoid long paragraphs and sentences
- 3) Include a visual to help tell your story.  
Photos, videos and podcasts help to engage the reader. Please provide captions and photo credit and make sure to submit a completed [IMLS Photograph, Movie Film, Videotape, and/or Sound Recording Authorization Release](#) signed by whoever owns the image.

### **What information should I include about myself?**

You may include the following at the end of your blog post:

- a short “about the author” bio;
- your photograph; and
- your organization’s name, email, Web site, and short description.

### **What are the formatting rules?**

- Use MS Word or compatible text document.
- We encourage hyperlinks to on-topic content, provided the information contained in these links is not commercial or political in nature.

## **What can I expect once I submit a blog post?**

If we are able to use your blog we will contact you for a final edit and provide you with an idea about when the blog will be published.

## **General Guidelines**

High value, quality blog content provides a positive, empowering story about what works in museums and libraries. Reaching the target audience includes the following best practices:

### ***Relevance***

What information is the general public absorbing about your topic? Be aware of any recent news related to your topic to make sure your writing is timely.

### ***Length***

Blogs should be no longer than 500 words, unless you are including a list. Short posts have higher readership. Complex stories or issues may merit more text, but consider breaking up the story or issue into multiple posts or using photos to break up the text.

### ***Language***

The tone of the blog should be conversational. Don't use bureaucratic jargon, legalese, long titles, or a lot of acronyms. USDA suggests using plain language and words, phrases that people actually use and understand (watch: *Blogging in Plain English* from Common Craft: <http://youtu.be/NN2l1pWXjXI>).

### ***Embed Hyperlinks***

Make sure your text is hyperlinked if it refers to another story, web page, program, press release, or downloadable material.

### ***Think about Titles***

Blog post titles should be compelling and inspire readers to read the blog. Read: HowTo.gov's *Write Compelling Content* <http://www.howto.gov/social-media/blogs/writing>.

## IMLS Blog Contributor Authorization and Release

**Blog Post Submission:** I, the undersigned, understand and acknowledge that, by submitting my Work(s) for transmission and display on the UpNext Blog website of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (“IMLS”), I irrevocably release any and all rights in intellectual property that I may hold in the Work(s) and place such Works, in their entirety, into the public domain so that they may be freely copied, republished, and redistributed. “Work(s)” include all textual material, in whatever form or medium, and does not mean any photograph, graphic material, artwork, hyperlink, software, visual and/or audio recording, or any other multimedia content (collectively, “Media Content”) that I may provide to IMLS. I represent and warrant that to the best of my knowledge and belief I am the legal and sole owner of the copyright of said Works.

**Media Content Submission:** I grant to IMLS and anyone authorized by IMLS, the non-exclusive, worldwide, and perpetual right to reproduce, display, perform, transmit, publish, broadcast, or otherwise use any Media Content, in whole or in part, that I may provide to IMLS in any and all media or distribution methods (now known or later developed), including without limitation, the UpNext Blog website, the IMLS website and IMLS or third-party publications, or for any other lawful purpose consistent with IMLS’s mission.

In giving this grant, without fee or limitation whatsoever, and in consideration of the opportunity to participate on the UpNext Blog, I represent and warrant that I have obtained all necessary rights, consents, and permissions to use and sublicense to IMLS to use any Media Content as contemplated herein, in whole or in part, including, but not limited to, any images and recordings of individuals. I agree to release, discharge, and hold harmless IMLS and its employees, from any and all claims, actions, and demands of whatever nature, including, but not limited to, any claims of libel, invasion of privacy, or infringement of copyright or publicity rights, arising out of or in connection with any use of said Media Content and/or any part thereof.

**Interview Authorization:** I consent to the visual and/or audio recording of my statements by IMLS and grant to IMLS, and anyone authorized by IMLS, the non-exclusive, worldwide, and perpetual right to (i) reproduce, display, perform, transmit, publish, broadcast, or otherwise use all or any portion of the statements (the “Interview”) in any and all media or distribution methods (now known or later developed), including without limitation, the UpNext Blog website, the IMLS YouTube website, the IMLS website, and IMLS or third-party publications, or for any other lawful purpose consistent with IMLS’s mission; and (ii) to use my image and name in connection with all uses of the Interview. I agree to release, discharge, and hold harmless IMLS and its employees, from any and all claims, actions, and demands of whatever nature, including, but not limited to, any claims of libel, invasion of privacy, or infringement of copyright or publicity rights, arising out of or in connection with any use of the Interview and/or any part thereof.

I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product and the use to which it may be applied by IMLS. By executing this Authorization and Release, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the contents herein.

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Name of Contributor

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Date

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Signature